

## **MAJORSHIP**

**Area: ENGLISH**

**Focus: Mythology and Folklore**

### **LET Competencies:**

1. Gain insights into the beginnings of mythology as an attempt of ancient people to explain nature and of natural phenomena.
2. Discover similarities (and contrasts) among the myths of the different countries and draw implications thereafter.

Reflect on the values derived from mythology, a rich body of knowledge.

### **Definition of Terms**

Myth : (1) a story (2) that is usually of unknown origin and (3) at least partially traditional (4) that ostensibly relates historical events usually of such description as (5) to serve to explain some particular event, institution, or natural phenomenon (Webster)

Myths are certain products of the imagination of a people which take the form of stories. (H.J. Rose, A Handbook of Greek Mythology)

A myth is a story about gods, other supernatural beings, or heroes of a long past time. (M. Reinhold, Past and Present)

Myth is a cognitive structure analogous to language through which primitive people organize their experiences. (J. Peradotto, Classical Mythology)

Myth is the symbolic form which is generated, shaped, and transmitted by the creative imagination of pre- and extra-logical people as they respond to and encapsulate the wealth of experience. (R.J. Schork, "Classical Mythology," The Classic Journal)

Fairy tale : a make-believe story about fairies, wizards, giants, or other characters who possess magical or unusual powers

Folklore : traditions, customs, and stories of one culture or group of people

Legend : a story about the past that is considered to be true but is usually a combination of both fact and fiction

Mythology : a group of myths from a single group or culture

Supernatural : more than what is natural or normal; showing godlike or magical powers; exhibiting superhuman strength

### **Types of Myth**

- PURE MYTH OR TRUE MYTH OR MYTH PROPER  
Myths of this kind tend to be examples of primitive science or religion. They explain natural phenomena or the origin of things, and they describe how individuals should behave toward the gods.
- SAGA OR LEGEND

Myths of this variety tend to be examples of primitive history; they contain a germ or seed of historical fact and enlarge upon it with great flourish. A good example of a saga or legend is the story of the war at Troy.

- **FOLK-TALE OR FAIRY-TALE**

Myths of this species tend to be examples of primitive fiction. Tales of this sort are told for pleasure and amusement. Frequently the stories contain supernatural characters such as ghosts, elves, dwarfs, or demons, and they often include elements of magic, e.g., spells, potions, and objects.

## **Sources of Mythology and Folklore**

***Aesop's Fables*** : a collection of fables under the name of Aesop over 2,000 years ago in Greece. According to Herodotus, Aesop lived in the mid-sixth century and was a slave and that he was killed by the people of Delphi, perhaps for seditious or sacrilegious beliefs.

***A Thousand and One Nights*** (also known as ***The Arabian Nights***) : a collection of stories and fables from Arabia, Egypt, India, and Persia that were compiled from oral tales that had been passed down through these cultures for generations. Some of the well-known characters include Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sinbad the Sailor. Jinn are common figures in these stories.

***The Great Epics of the World***: Myths and legends are usually sourced from the existing epics of the different cultures of the world. The Iliad and The Odyssey of the Greeks, The Aeneid of the Romans, The Mahabharata and Ramayana of India, Beowulf of England, The Song of Roland of France, El Cid of Spain, Shah Namah of Persia, Gilgamesh of the Babylonians, etc.

***The Panchatantra*** : a collection of fables which was used to educate Indian princes into becoming wise kings. It is supposed that ***Aesop's Fables*** largely owed much from the Panchatantra.

***The Poems of Hesiod*** : ***Theogony*** and ***Works and Days***. Hesiod is an early Greek poet who probably flourished around 700 B.C. Much of Greek mythology came from his two complete works.

## **THE GREAT THEMES OF MYTH**

### **CREATION**

Creation myths set the stage for more particular myths supporting social structures, the relation of human beings to the natural world, and questions of life and death. A creator deity brings into being the sun, moon, and stars, seas and mountains, and so on, along with deities that personify them, then plant life, animals, and humans that populate the world.

### **GODS AND GODDESSES**

Universally, people believed in ideal beings leading them. Such deities possess human characteristics: they have parents and offspring, and they belong to some social grouping. An important role of mythology is to reinforce and justify relations of power and leadership

### **HEROIC FIGURES**

Heroes and heroines are semi-divine beings: in many mythologies they have superhuman powers through divine parentage; or they may have acquired divinity through their deeds as men or women on earth, with the help of a deity, by use of magic weapons, or acquisition of magic powers through ingenuity or trickery.

### **MONSTERS AND DEMONS**

Monsters and demons are most familiar as the beings that a heroic figure confronts and overcomes. They defy divine order both in their appearance –typically but not invariably deformed or hideous – and in their actions, such as attacking or capturing a human or divine victim.

### **ANIMALS**

They are featured as wild creatures – predatory beasts or the elusive prey of hunters; or as helpful beings tamed by humans, or as possessing powers. Deities may disguise themselves as animals; or they may have heads or other features in token of the characteristics they supposed to have in common, or of a clan fetish.

### **THE UNDERWORLD**

Inevitably associations with burial prompt tales of gloom and terror of the unknown yet inevitable. A strong mythic duality : Earth swallows up the dead, but equally it produces food plants and harbors mineral wealth.

### **JOURNEYS, QUESTS, AND TRIALS**

Quests and journeys bring mythological figures into a number of situations where they can prove their strength. In numerous myths loyalty to the dead initiates journeys to the underworld to try to bring loved ones back to life.

### **THE AFTERLIFE**

The afterlife, some form of existence after death, takes as many different forms in mythologies as the culture from which they are drawn. Some speak of paradise where the pains of life on earth are left behind. After death comes judgment, a rigorous trial is conducted, and torture awaits those who fail the trial.

### **WORLDS DESTROYED**

Creation may be seen in myth as chance event or something that occurred despite opposing forces; likewise an end to the world in its present form may be inevitable or threatened, whether by divine will, as a result of attack by forces of evil, or in punishment for human misdeeds.

### **THE MYTHOLOGIES OF THE WORLD**

**Mesopotamian Mythology.** The Assyro-Babylonian tradition had its core of mythology of the Sumerians. The gods included Annu (sky), Enlil (storm), Enki (water), Ea (wisdom), Ishtar (fertility), Erishkigal (underworld).

**Canaanite Mythology.** Canaan is here used in its biblical sense : Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine. The divinities included El (the creator), Baal (heavy rains).

**Egyptian Mythology.** The dying and rising vegetation gods of both Mesopotamia and Canaan have their counterpart in the Egyptian mythology. Osiris, Isis, Horus, and are the deities.

**Greek Mythology.** The major deities were associated with aspects of nature such as Zeus (sky and thunder) or Poseidon (sea), and with abstract qualities, such as Athena (wisdom) or Apollo (arts, healing, prophecy).

**Roman Mythology.** It incorporated those of conquered peoples but was in many respects an adaptation of the Greeks. Juno, originally an Etruscan deity of the moon, protected the city of Rome. Quirinus, a Sabine war god, was assimilated to Romulus, deified mythical founder of Rome.

**Celtic Mythology.** Celtic mythology is preserved in Wales and Ireland which the Romans failed to subdue. The druids and bards preserved the tradition of the people led by a warrior elite with spectacular achievements in terms of conquest and plunder but without the organizational skills to consolidate an empire.

**Norse Mythology.** Norse or Germanic mythology also glorifies battle but against a harsher natural background: life derives from ice and fire and is ultimately consumed by them. The individual's self-sacrifice in the service of Odin (death and magic) who brings the reward of unlimited food and drink – and more fighting – in Valhalla. Other gods are Thor, Frigg, and Balder.

**Mexican and South American Mythologies.** The mythology of the warlike Aztecs in Meso-America also justified bloodshed, though they adopted the practice of sacrifice for which they are so vilified from the Toltecs, the first of many older civilizations that they overcame. The empire-builders of South America, the Incas, like the Aztecs, considered themselves the elect of the gods, their ruler offspring of the sun. The heavens, with astronomical observations and calendrics, dominated mythology.

**Persian Mythology.** Initially, Persian mythology reflected a life of warriors and of nomadic pastoralists beginning to turn to agriculture in fertile pockets amid harsh deserts and mountains. It supported a cult held in the open air, sometimes on mountaintops, with the deities personifying beneficent and destructive forces of nature. Later developments stressed this duality of good and evil, light and dark in constant battle.

**Indian Mythology.** The Vedic mythology of India, derived from the Aryans, also has Indra, a warrior sky god, insuring fertilizing rain and dispatching earlier inhabitants of the new homeland and demonizing them. Sacrifice and cult itself was deified developing an endless conflict of gods and demons of Hinduism, together with cyclic creation, maintenance of the balance of good and evil, and destruction to prepare the way for new creation.

**Chinese Mythology.** Chinese mythology is rooted in its vast land, in veneration of its emperors, whose good rule brought prosperity and was a mark of heavenly approval, and in reverence for ancestors, the link between humans and gods. Three philosophies shaped Chinese mythology : (1) Taoism taught that cosmic energy and all life in mystically compounded of yin (the negative, female principle) and yang (the complementary positive, male principle); (2) Confucianism upheld the leadership of emperor and aristocracy, with mythology showing the benefits of learning and discipline; (3) Buddhism brought elements of Indian thought on reincarnation, the conflict of good and evil, and judgment.

**Japanese Mythology.** Like in China, native mythology centered on land, and the establishment of imperial dynasties was combined with Buddhist doctrine on death and the afterlife, ultimately from India and related to Persian traditions, for example Yama/Yima as first man and king/judge of the dead.

## **The Greek and Roman Gods**

The Greek culture existed before the Roman culture. When the Romans decided to develop a mythology, they adopted the gods of Greek mythology and changed their names. Typically, these Roman versions of the gods are more disciplined and do not take on the same colourful and complex personalities that many of the Greek gods have.

Table of Greek and Roman Gods and Goddesses

GREEK	ROMAN	TITLE
Aphrodite	Venus	goddess of love and beauty
Apollo	Apollo	god of music, poetry, and the sun
Ares	Mars	god of war
Artemis	Diana	goddess of the moon
Asclepius	Aesculapius	god of medicine
Athena	Minerva	goddess of wisdom
Cronus	Saturn	god of the sky and agriculture
Demeter	Ceres	goddess of fertility and crops
Dionysus	Bacchus	god of wine, ecstasy
Eros	Cupid	god of love
Gaea	Terra	Mother Earth
Hades	Dis	god of the underworld
Hephaestus	Vulcan	god of fire; craftsman for the gods
Hera	Juno	queen of the gods; goddess of marriage
Hermes	Mercury	messenger of the gods, travel
Persephone	Proserpina	queen of the underworld
Poseidon	Neptune	god of the sea
Zeus	Jupiter	ruler of the gods

### Zeus, the King

Zeus is acknowledged as the leader of the new generation of gods. He is consistently identified as the sky-god. Many of his attributes and titles are attributed to his functions as the god of the sky, e.g. Rainer, Thunderer, Cloud Gatherer, Lightning God, Sender of Fair Winds.

### Division of Authority

Zeus and his brothers determine the spheres of their authority: Zeus won the sky; Poseidon, the sea; and Hades, the underworld. The surface of the Earth and Mt. Olympus are neutral territories.

### Hera

The wife of Zeus, Hera, is considered as the queen of the Olympians. Her name is originally a title which meant "Our Lady" or "Great lady". She became greatly associated with the earth, chiefly with marriage and childbirth. Her Roman name is Juno. Due to her husband's tendency to womanize, Hera is pictured as a wife who was troubled by her husband's apparent infidelities. Since she could not directly punish the ruler of the gods, she takes vengeance on his mistresses or even on the children produced from these romances.

### Poseidon

Poseidon is primarily the god of the sea but he is also associated with earthquakes and horses. His Roman equivalent is Neptune. Like the sea, Poseidon is unpredictable and easily aroused to anger. He is frequently pictured with a trident, a three-pronged spear which is used by fishermen.

### **Hestia**

Hestia is the goddess of the family hearth and its fire. By extension, she came to be regarded as the guardian of the home, the family, the local community and the state as the whole. **Vesta** is her Roman name.

### **The Vestal Virgins**

The rites of Vesta were performed by priestesses who were called the Vestal Virgins; each of whom took a vow of virginity in honor of the goddess they served.

### **Demeter**

Demeter is the goddess of the grain and the Earth's fertility in general. Her Roman equivalent was **Ceres**.

Demeter's marriage to Zeus produced a daughter named **Persephone** (Roman: **Proserpina**).

Demeter and Persephone represented essentially the same thing: the fertility of the Earth. When a distinction was made, Persephone represented the seed and Demeter, the blossoming grain.

### **Artemis**

The birth of Artemis marks the second generation of the gods of Olympus. **Diana** is the Roman equivalent to Artemis. Artemis is the goddess of wild nature and of the animals who live there. She is often portrayed as the huntress with a bow and arrow, but she also carefully protects the animals in her domain. She could be unpredictable, like the open country. She could be benevolent and merciful but also harsh and deadly.

### **Apollo**

Apollo is a god said to be as complex and mysterious as Zeus. He is the god of reason and moderation, the giver of laws and thus, the rewarder of right action and the punisher of the wrong. He is, along with his sister Artemis, a god of archery and could send disease or cure to humans with his arrow. He was the god of the sun as Artemis is of the moon. He is also the god of poetry and music, and, in what perhaps his best known attribute, of prophecy.

### **Athena**

Athena is a virgin goddess of domestic arts and crafts, of wisdom and of war. She is the patroness of Athens and the protector of the cities, in general. She is known to the Romans as Minerva.

According to stories, an early goddess of wisdom, Metis, became pregnant by Zeus. It is foretold that her child would produce a son who will overthrow Zeus. To keep the prophecy from being fulfilled, Zeus swallowed Metis as she was about to give birth. Athena, their child, burst forth from his head. Zeus now becomes both the mother and the father of the child and has avoided the consequences of the prophecy.

### **Ares**

He is the son of Zeus and Hera and is considered the god of war. He represents the uncontrollable frenzy of battle and all the destruction and horrors of war. Due to his uncontrollable rage, he is disliked by most Greeks and some say, even by his father, Zeus. Despite this, his womanizing seems to have been taken from his father. His most famous affair was with Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Their affair produces four children despite its secrecy. Their children are Eros, Deimos, Phobos and Harmonia.

The Romans called their god of war, Mars. Unlike Ares, he is well loved by the Romans and his power is regarded as second to Jupiter. He is considered the protector of the city.

### **Aphrodite**

She is the goddess of physical love and passionate desire. Her Roman equivalent is Venus. Some say that she is a daughter of Zeus and Dione, a daughter of Oceanus. Other claims posit that she is born from the mating of “aphros” which means foam of the sea. She is married to Hephaestus, but largely due to her nature, she has many affairs.

Her mating with Hermes, for one, results to the birth of their son, Hermaphrodite. As the handsome Hermaphrodite is bathing in a spring, a nymph falls in love with him and leaps upon him and prays to the gods they may never be separated, the Gods answers her prayer and their bodies become one. From that time on, a creature which combines both male and female characteristics has been called a hermaphrodite.

### **Hephaestus**

He is the master craftsman and metal worker of the gods. His forge is always a place of much activity as he designs and produces ingenious and artistic creations. His masterpieces includes the palaces of the gods, Zeus’ throne and sceptre, the chariot of Helios, the arrows of Apollo and Artemis, the sickle of Demeter and the weapons of Athena. He is also created the armors of great heroes like Achilles and Aeneas.

### **Hermes**

While Hermes is the youngest of the Gods, he had very primitive origins. He is the messenger of Zeus, the herald of the gods, the guide for travellers, the leader of spirits of the underworld, giver of fertility and the patron of orators, writers, businessmen, thieves and athletes. His Roman name is Mercury.

As a messenger and herald of the gods, he is pictured wearing a broad-rimmed hat, and with winged shoes or sandals.

### **Hades**

Hades is the god of the underworld. His name means, the “unseen one.” The Greeks hesitated a lot to mention his name so they often called him Pluto, which means “rich” or “wealthy” to refer to both the number of the spirits under his authority and to the fact that all crops grow from beneath the earth. The Romans borrowed the name Pluto from the Greeks to refer to their god of the underworld. Although, they also call him Dis. His wife is Persephone.

### **Dionysus**

He is the god of wine and by extension, everything associated with it. Dionysus was from the beginning associated with the fertility of the grape vine and gradually this function expanded to include fertility in general (crop, animal, human). He is in this regard, the male counterpart of Demeter.

The frequently portrayed symbols of Dionysus are 1) a staff twined with a grape vine and ivy leaves with a pine cone placed on top; 2) a wreath of ivy grape vine ; and 3) wine cup. Some Greeks also call him Bacchus was borrowed by the Romans to name their god of wine.

## **Theories Related to the Study of Mythology**

### **ANCIENT THEORIES**

#### **1. Rationalism**

According to this theory, myths represent an early form of logical thinking: they all, have a logical base. For example, the myth of Pegasus, the flying

horse can best be explained by imagining the reaction of the first Greek to see a horse. Compared to other animals they know, the horse must have seemed to fly as it gallops fast and leap over high obstacles.

## **2. Etymological Theory**

This theory states that all myths derive from and can be traced back to certain words in the language. Sources of most mythological characters have their origins from the languages of the world. Hades, for example, originally meant “unseen” but came eventually to be the name for the god of the dead.

## **3. Allegorical theory**

In the allegorical explanation, all myths contain hidden meanings which the narrative deliberately conceals or encodes. Example : story of King Midas and his golden touch

Allegorists offered this simple reason why stories were used in the first place rather than a simple statement of the ideas they represented: they interested people who might not listen to emotionless concepts but who could be attracted by imaginative narratives.

## **4. Euhemerism**

Euhemerus, a Greek who lived from 325-275 BC, maintained that all myths arise from historical events which were merely exaggerated

## **Modern Theories**

### **1. Naturalism**

In this hypothesis, all myths are thought to arise from an attempt to explain natural phenomena. People who believe in this theory narrow the source of myths by tracing their origins from the worship of the sun or the moon.

### **2. Ritualism**

According to this theory, all myths are invented to accompany and explain religious ritual; they describe the significant events which have resulted in a particular ceremony.

### **3. Diffusionism**

The diffusionists maintain that all myths arose from a few major cultural centers and spread throughout the world.

### **4. Evolutionism**

Myth making occurs at a certain stage in the evolution of the human mind. Myths, are therefore, an essential part of all developing societies and the similarities from one culture to the next can be explained by the relatively limited number of experiences open to such communities when myths arise.

### **5. Freudianism**

When Sigmund Freud, the founder of modern psychology, interpreted the dreams of his patients, he found great similarities between them and the ancient myths. Freud believes that certain infantile are repressed, i.e. they are eliminated from the conscious mind but continues to exist within the individual in some other form. Sometimes these feelings emerge into consciousness under various disguises, one of which is the myth.

### **6. Jungian archetypes**

Carl Jung was a prominent psychologist who, while he accepted Freud’s theory about the origin of myths , did not believe that it went far in explaining the



striking similarities between the motifs found in ancient stories and those of his patients. He postulated that each of us possesses a “collective unconscious” which we inherit genetically. It contains very general ideas, themes, or motifs which are passed along from one generation to another and are retained as part of our human inheritance.

## **7. Structuralism**

This theory is a fairly recent development and is closely allied with the research of linguists. According to this theory, all human behaviour, the way we eat, dress, speak, is patterned into codes which have the characteristics of language. To understand the real meaning of myth, therefore, we must analyze it linguistically.

## **8. Historical-critical theory**

This theory maintains that there are a multitude of factors which influence the origin and development of myths and that no single explanation will suffice. We must examine each story individually to see how it began and evolved.

### **Some Interesting Characters from Mythology**

- **Dragons.** Stories of fire-breathing dragons vary throughout different cultures. In Chinese mythology, dragons are of many different types. Most of them are known to be both generous and wise. Some represent good luck. The spiritual Azure Dragon which controls the weather is the most powerful Chinese dragon.
- **Unicorn.** The unicorn is a mystical animal that is found in the mythologies of many different cultures throughout the world. Representing beauty, goodness, and strength, this legendary creature appears in art, folklore, and literature. During the Middle Ages, the unicorn was a symbol of love and purity.
- **Troll.** According to Scandinavian folklore, trolls are hostile creatures who lived inside dark caves in the mountains. They are keepers of buried treasures such as silver and gold, and are known for their pointed ears, long noses, and large teeth. They can live for 500 years and are impossible to kill for they have the ability to regenerate or regrow a lost or severed body part in a matter of days.
- **Jinni.** A jinni is a spirit from Arab and Muslim folklore that inhabits the earth and can assume human or animal form. Jinns have many supernatural powers, such as the ability to cast spells on people and grant them wishes. There are five tribes of jinn. These are, according to their power, the Marid, the Efrit, the Shaitan, the Jinn, and the Jann.
- **Hydra.** The nine-headed serpent Hydra is one of the most hideous and ghastly monsters of Greek mythology. Slayed by Heracles, Hydra was almost indestructible because two crude heads would spring up to replace each head that a slayer would sever. Hydra was a child of the terrible monster Typhon, who has 100 heads and 200 evil eyes that oozed venom.
- **Chimera.** The chimera is a huge fire-breathing monster that has the head of a lion, the body of a dragon, and the hind legs of a goat. According to Greek mythology, the Chimera ravaged the Greek city of Lycia until it was slayed by the prince of Corinth, Bellerophon with the help of Pegasus.
- **Centaur.** The centaurs are a group of monsters that lived in the mountains near the city of Arcadia in Greece. From the waist up, their bodies are human, and their lower bodies and legs are in the form of a horse. The centaurs lived

without regard to order and do not honor the gods or respect humans. One good centaur however is Chiron, the son of Cronus, who is an immortal known for his kindness and wisdom.

- **Fenrir.** Fenrir is a large ferocious wolf with fierce yellow eyes and tremendous jaw. When it was just a pup, the Norse god captured it and locked it in a cage because they feared the wolf might one day be responsible for the destruction of the world.
- **Oni.** The oni are giant horned demons. They are said to have come to Japan from China with the arrival of Buddhism, and Buddhist priest perform annual rites to expel them. The oni can be a variety of colors and have three fingers, three toes and sometimes three eyes. Cruel and lecherous, they can sweep down from the sky to steal the souls of dying people.
- **Nagas.** According to South-east Asian mythology, nagas are supernatural beings who take the form of serpents. The king of the serpent deities Mucilinda shelters the Buddha with the outspread hoods of his seven heads during a downpour that lasted for seven days. When the sun returns, the serpent is transformed into a young prince who paid homage to Buddha.
- **Guei or Kuei.** In Chinese mythology, guei are spirits formed from the yin, or negative essence, of people's souls. These spirits of emanations are always feared because they are said to take their revenge on those people who ill-treated them when they were alive. They can be identified because they wear clothes which have no hems and their bodies cast non shadows.
- **Kappa.** In Japanese mythology, the kappa is a race of monkey-like demons. They lived in ponds and rivers and lure human beings, as well as other creatures down into the depths of the water where they then feed on them. As well as being particularly fond of blood, they also like cucumbers. They have monkey-like faces, webbed hands and feet and yellow-green skin. They wear shells like tortoises.

## CREATION MYTHS

### ***Assyro-Babylonian***

Inert chaos was embodied in Apsu, the sweet water in which floated the earth and which fed its springs, and his consort, the salt sea waters, known as Mother Tiamat. From their union came monstrous serpents, then the male and female principles (the worlds of heaven and earth) and the great deities – the mighty sky god Anu, the god of controlled water Enki, and the resourceful god of wisdom Ea.

Led by Anu, these gods wished creation to proceed, but Apsu resented their agitation and considered killing his own offspring. Tiamat resisted this plan, but when Ea killed Apsu by magic she marshalled monstrous forces to confront the Court of Heaven in battle. Ea's son Marduk was appointed as king to preserve creation. In epic combat Tiamat opened her mouth to consume Marduk, but he unleashed an "evil wind" which entered her stomach, distending her, so he could rip her apart. Half of her body became the sky, resting on the mountains that surround the earth, the other half of her body.

In completing the creation Marduk assigned the great gods to their abodes, set stars and moon in their places, and created time. From the blood of Kingu, leader of forces of chaos, Marduk created humankind to serve the gods.

### ***Borneo***

At the beginning of time, all creation was enclosed in the mouth of a gigantic snake. Eventually, a gold mountain arose and became home to the supreme god of the upper region, while a jewel mountain arose and became home to the supreme god of the lower region. The two mountains collided together on numerous occasions, each time creating part of the universe. This period has become known as the first epoch of creation, when the clouds the sky, the mountains, the cliffs, the sun and moon were made. Afterwards, the "Hawk of Heaven" and the great fish Ila-Ilai Langit were brought into being, followed by two fabulous creatures: Didis Mahendera who had eyes made of jewels, and Rowang Riwo, who had golden saliva. Finally, the golden headdress of the god Mahatala appeared.

In the second epoch of creation, Jata, the divine maiden, created the land. Soon afterwards, hills and rivers were formed. In the third epoch of creation, the tree of life appeared and united the upper and lower worlds.

### **Celtic Myth of the Holy Grail**

King Arthur's magic ship sailed three times round the island of the dead. It was guarded by 6,000 warriors, who slaughtered all but seven of Arthur's men; nevertheless Arthur won the ever-replenished cauldron from which only the valiant and noble could eat. Another myth relates that in his search for it, King Arthur journeyed to the realm of the dead ; at its entrance he killed a sorceress by cutting her in half like two bowls.

Because of their moral failings knights such as Lancelot were denied a vision of the Holy Grail, interpreted as the cup used at the Last Supper. It was finally secured by Galahad. Among Arthur's knights, Lancelot's son Sir Galahad, who had the strength of 10 men, was pure enough to see it. He carried it from Britain to Sarras, a Mediterranean island where he became king, dying after a year in answer to his own prayer that his soul be released to eternal life. Upon his death the Grail rose to heaven, never to be seen again.